

AN ESSAY BY SGI PRESIDENT IKEDA THE DETERMINATION TO WIN

‘The determination to win is the true revolutionary spirit,’ SGI President Ikeda writes. ‘It is the fundamental spirit of faith.’

Planting a cherry tree,
Commemorating the centennial
Of my mentor’s birth.

I planted a cherry tree at our Okinawa Training Center to commemorate the centennial of Josei Toda’s birth.



One day, as a gentle spring breeze blew, Mr. Toda and I walked near Hibiya Park in Central Tokyo, close to the imperial palace. Concerned for my delicate health, Mr. Toda admonished: “Daisaku, you mustn’t die young. You can’t achieve great things if you don’t live long. Don’t forget to get sufficient rest. That’s the source of vitality and the strength to keep on fighting.”

As we walked, rain began to fall, so we waited for a taxi by the imperial palace moat. Looking across the road at the imposing building that was serving as General MacArthur’s General Headquarters, I said, “Someday I will build a magnificent palace of kosen-rufu that is just as grand as that building.” My mentor smiled warmly.

We had a hard time finding a taxi in the rain. “Sensei,” I said, “sometime I am going to buy you a car so that you can be driven wherever you have to go. I’m so sorry that you have to wait like this in the cold.” Mr. Toda nodded happily at my promise.



I spent my youth proudly and without regret, working alongside my mentor. Those were days of constant difficulty and struggle. That profound, undying spirit to walk the path of mentor and disciple will never change in the slightest, for as long as I live.

One day, Mr. Toda said to me: “Only through victory can justice be upheld. We must never let justice be defeated.”

The determination to win is the true revolutionary spirit. It is the fundamental spirit of faith. Nichiren Daishonin declares, “Buddhism primarily concerns itself with victory or defeat” (*The Writings of Nichiren Dai-shonin*, p. 835). As his disciples, we must always bare these words deeply in mind.

While walking together, Mr. Toda told me strictly: “Our lives are short, but what we achieve for kosen-rufu endures. Be a person who, in the short time allotted to him, joyfully writes, through valiant actions, a magnificent history that will live on forever, a history won through the workings of cause and effect of the Mystic Law!”

Some people may be destined to fight while filled with a sense of isolation and loneliness. Some may strive in tears, confronting bitter challenges. But the vital thing is that we fight through to the very last step of the journey! That is the secret to a noble life crowned in glory and triumph.



When I was talking with officials of the Chinese University of Hong Kong on Feb. 14, the person next to me made a remark that shone with luminous wisdom: “Good people always have enemies. You can tell the greatness of such people by the number of foes attacking them.” There is not a single great person in the world who has not suffered persecution.

This is clearly articulated in the Daishonin’s writings, which tell us that those who uphold the Lotus Sutra and widely propagate the correct teaching will be slandered and defamed, and that the three powerful enemies will arise without fail. For this reason, the Lotus Sutra’s practitioners will be showered with slander and abuse by the likes of what the Sutra describes as “evil devils, the devils’ people and yakshas,” who are driven insane by envy. This is in complete accord with the Daishonin’s teachings. When it happens to us, we should regard it as a proud honor. In fact, it is a sign that we are on the way to attaining Buddhahood.

Do not fear the criticism of others! You must not be afraid of such abuse.

The Daishonin was exiled twice and even condemned to death because of completely groundless slander and criticism. All sorts of false reports, such as “Nichiren’s followers have set fires in Kamakura,” were spread far and wide by the Daishonin’s enemies.

We see the same thing today. All kinds of false, baseless reports are written about our organization in the media, and we are persecuted and oppressed just as the Daishonin warns we will be.

This is what demonstrates the SGI’s qualification to carry out the great undertaking of kosen-rufu. And there is no more noble and glorious endeavor in the world than kosen-rufu.



The joy-filled grounds of our Okinawa Training Center in Onnason were abloom with sunflowers, whose golden faces seemed literally to beam with sunny smiles.

We started planting these sunflowers when President David Krieger of the Nuclear Age Peace Foundation presented some sunflower seeds as a symbol of peace to the members of Okinawa in July 1997.

How did sunflowers become a symbol of peace?

When the Soviet Union collapsed, the third largest arsenal of nuclear warheads in the world, totaling some 1,600, remained in Ukraine. The new Ukraine republic decided to send all these nuclear warheads back to Russia, where they were to be dismantled. Ukraine wanted to be a nuclear weapon-free state.

The weapons were all shipped back to Russia by June 1996. On the site of a former Ukrainian underground missile silo, the defense ministers of Russia, the United States and Ukraine planted sunflower seeds. The U.S. Secretary of Defense William Perry said: “Sunflowers instead of missiles in the soil would insure peace for future generations.”

From a passionate desire to put an end to an age of self-deception, in which demonic weapons are falsely touted as the guarantee of peace—sunflowers became a new symbol of peace.



Two years ago, I met President Krieger and his wife, Carolee, at the Okinawa Training Center. President Krieger and his wife have worked ceaselessly to promote Abolition

2000, a global movement to eliminate nuclear weapons, based on the dream of replacing missiles with sunflowers. The Soka Gakkai youth division members rose to the call of this noble peace movement and collected an astounding 13 million signatures across Japan for a petition in support of Abolition 2000.

Youth is another name for action. Youth is the torch of hope. Youth is the banner of victory.

President Krieger was moved by the youth division's effort and said, "They have given courage and hope to people around the world." Nothing makes me happier than to hear words of praise for the youth division.

The SGI will be blessed with an endless stream of talented young people who have firm conviction and a commitment to justice and truth. That is why we have nothing to fear, ever.



It was in Okinawa that I first began to write *The Human Revolution*. The first installment appeared in the *Seikyo Shimbun* on New Year's Day 1965, 35 years ago.

The theme of my book is that world peace starts with the human revolution—the inner transformation—of the individual. A single large sunflower blossom contains the seeds for more than a thousand new plants. Similarly, when one brave warrior for peace stands up, his or her resolve spreads out in a thousand, 10,000 waves. Courage always stirs a response.



In July, the G-8 Kyushu–Okinawa Summit Meeting will be held. As one who loves Okinawa, I pray for its great success.

Recently, in my SGI Day Peace Proposal, I talked about a "culture of peace." I hope that everyone around the world will look to Okinawa, a pioneer in this area.

May my beloved Okinawa become a sphere of happiness and peace unsurpassed anywhere!